

# **Sgt Alvin C. York State Historic Park Strategic Management Plan**

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**2023 – 2033**

DRAFT



T E N N E S S E E  
**State Parks**

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## Park Purpose, History and Description

Mission Statement of Sgt. Alvin C. York State Historic Park:

To perpetually preserve, protect, and share the narrative of one of Tennessee's most beloved sons whose impact reaches well beyond the Valley of the Three Forks of the Wolf onto a national stage which generated great social and educational change during the first half of the twentieth century.

Vision Statement of Sgt. Alvin C. York State Historic Park:

To educate, protect, and carry forward the legacy of Sgt. York by professionally managing not only his narrative, and the secondary narratives that accompany his story, but the historic structures and material culture found on site that are critical public use and educational features. In addition to this, it is also critical in our site's vision to ensure all staff are professionally trained, passionate, and dedicated to seeing this vision through in perpetuity.

### History

Sgt. Alvin C. York was one of the most decorated soldiers of World War 1 receiving both the Medal of Honor, and the French Croix de Guerre. York's story began in rural Tennessee during the first part of the 20th century, in the remote Wolf River Valley of Fentress County. Raised as a blacksmith, farmer, and sharpshooter, he had little education throughout his early years. When he received his draft notice in 1917, he was a conscientious objector based on religious beliefs, but proved his worth as a soldier in battle on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 1918, when he and 7 members of his squad captured 132 German soldiers, and silenced numerous machine gun nests. Upon his triumphant return from the War, and because of his national fame, he was gifted a home and 400-acre farm in the Wolf River Valley. He lived the remainder of his life in that home and became a strong advocate for education and opportunity in his local community. His tireless efforts opened two schools in the area, the York Institute, and the York Bible School. He continued to assist his community until his death in 1964.

## Goals, Objectives and Action Plans

### THE RESOURCES: Exemplary Natural and Cultural Stewardship

**Goal:** Tennessee State Parks will be nationally recognized for exemplary stewardship of natural and cultural resources.

**Objective - *More and better stewards:*** Increase internal and external stewards who share Tennessee State Parks core values and can contribute to the State Parks mission to preserve, protect, and share Tennessee's natural and cultural resources.

**Action Plan:** Increase partnership with state operated York Institute. This is crucial for increasing future stewardship of the site. The institute was opened by Sgt. York himself in the 1920's to provide his local community with education opportunities that were needed. The student body at the school are aware of the site, but a partnership in which volunteers were utilized would strengthen their appreciation of the site. The main goal would be to partner with their agricultural department, which would then assist with our interpretative offerings as we focus further on the York Farm.

**Objective - Better resource management practices:** Identify, manage, and restore unique natural and cultural resources for generations to come.

Action Plan:

A. York Bible School – a crucial site that requires restoration. This structure would provide offices, archive storage space, meeting space, and programming/event space.

B. Hiking Trails - develop resource-based recreation by creating a hiking trail in the “shooting match field” or Camp McGinnis area of the site. This trail should follow the course of the river to the forks of the river, highlighting a very important geographical feature of the area. A “trail through history” could be implemented with a small longhunter camp established along the river, interpretive panels detailing the history of the early settlers, as well as information at the forks. Connectivity between the Gristmill side and York Home side is crucial as well, providing a full walking path for the entirety of the park. Finally, information is available for the Civil War era training camp “Camp McGinnis” located nearby the site. Another possible area of hiking opportunities lies on the hillside behind the York Visitor Center.

C. Restore York Home to circa 1930’s 40’s interpretive theme. The home is currently furnished, but with an inconsistent theme throughout. This needs to be addressed so the York Home, the most important and visited resource onsite, is presented in a professional and cohesive manner.

**Objective: Better data and technology:** Leverage data and technology to help inform and guide decisions on natural and cultural resources stewardship.

Action Plan:

A. Utilize Park customer feedback surveys to determine visitor reaction to the programs presented at the park. Use that data to improve or modify the program.

B. Track overall visitor usage of target areas to determine the best use for that area. Does it need to be maintained, or can a resource management plan be established for that area to increase native species, or encourage habitat for wildlife, etc.?

C. Updated Museum displays utilizing new equipment like touch screens, sounds, imagery, and interactive programs would be crucial in providing a new source of connection to the park, and thus, more stewardship of the site.

## THE VISITOR: Welcoming and Inviting to All

**Goal:** Tennessee State Parks will be the most accessible, welcoming, and inviting system of parks that enriches Tennesseans and visitors through excellent interpretation, education, and resource-based recreation.

**Objective: accessible, welcoming, and inviting to all:** create quality and varied programs of interpretation, recreation, and outreach so that all audiences feel welcome and invited.

Action Plan: While there is already some of this discussion going on in our current home tours and various programs throughout the year, specific research and programs, and informational panels/displays need to be developed concerning these three topics:

A. Women’s History – discussion and research of women’s roles in the Valley during the time period of York’s life would be crucial. Demonstrations and programs highlighting

contributions from not only members of Sgt. York's family, but other local families throughout the area.

- B. Minority History – There is evidence of minorities in the valley, but very little research is conducted. Several names have been discovered by park staff and research is ongoing to tell those individuals stories. Contributions from minorities towards life in the valley are significant and needs more attention.
- C. Labor History – This topic would be very easy to develop concerning our site. The Labor history in the area is well documented and very prevalent and develops the background story to a lot of the individuals that we highlight daily. The work that was accomplished shaped these people's lives and made them who they are.

**Objective:** *high quality programming:* develop and support mission-based and resource-relevant programs to engage visitors, empower staff, and develop community well-being.

Action Plan:

- A. Develop Yearly schedule with specific programs assigned to certain times of the year. E.g.: World War One programs in the spring and fall of the year.
- B. Develop Yearly themes that all programs presented during that year fall under that specific theme. E.g.: "World War 2 comes to the Valley", base all programs presented during the year to the World War 2 era.
- C. Resource-based programming is crucial to the success of the park, and guided canoe floats by park staff need to be established more routinely. The Wolf River is a vital character in the story of the Valley and connecting visitors to that resource is needed. Fishing, boating, and hiking along the river are just some ways to connect them.
- D. Yearly events that can be introduced to tell a fuller story of the area are being planned currently and consist of annual programs that highlight the history of the park.

**Objective:** *resource-based outdoor recreation:* provide resource-based outdoor recreation opportunities that ensure representation of Tennessee's natural, scenic, and cultural resources.

Action Plan:

- A. As stated above, Resource based programming is crucial to the success of the park, and is already being addressed, but a more consistent schedule of resource-based activities should be established. The Wolf River is a vital character in the story of the Valley and connecting visitors to that resource is needed. Fishing, boating, and hiking along the river are just some ways to connect them.
- B. Hiking is very popular across parks as evident by the park wide yearly hikes and its attendance, and our site lacks sufficient trail systems to connect visitors to the landscape. A trail established in an underutilized area behind the Visitor Center would be a perfect location for such a resource-based activity such as hiking. Subsequently, culturally based programs could be conducted on this trail as well further connecting visitors with the story of the park.

**Goal:** Tennessee State Parks will be well maintained with facilities and amenities that delight visitors and make Tennesseans proud.

**Objective:** *Improve maintenance:* Improve overall maintenance and upkeep of all park facilities and amenities that contribute to meaningful visitor experiences.

Action Plan:

A. Improve and update maintenance plans and outlines to detail what areas to maintain and at what time of year they should be addressed.

B. Have a scheduled inspection by regional maintenance of the facilities and grounds to identify what may need to be addressed, and how to address it, and provide resources (manpower, knowledge, tools, funding) to address pressing issues.

C. Equipment needs to be updated yearly. Old equipment should be removed at a certain scheduled date and new equipment assigned to a park to keep operations running consistently without malfunction or interruption.

**Objective:** *Better Park accessibility:* ensure all visitors have opportunities for meaningful experiences in every Tennessee State Park.

Action Plan:

A. Assess all park facilities and determine plausibility of ADA compliance. While many of our facilities are on the National Historic Registry, and thus cannot be altered via Registry regulation, we should work to provide options in lieu of accessibility. Utilizing VR related technology would be crucial for viewing inaccessible areas and would make it possible for many more visitors to experience certain areas of some of our facilities.

B. Create sound bites of important moments in the story of our site. Speeches, songs, descriptions of facilities, etc. could all be provided on personal devices, or accessible on web pages/platforms.

C. Utilize VR related technology to create a virtual experience of the WW1 trench that is onsite.

**Objective:** *Quality and welcoming facilities and amenities:* provide high-quality and well-planned facilities and amenities that enrich the visitor experience.

Action Plan:

A. A museum update is needed for the site with a more immersive experience for visitors as they enter the original general store. This look should be consistent with the 1940's theme that is already in place but encompasses the entirety of the store. New panels and interpretation should be reconsidered and implemented as well.

C. A more cohesive theme inside the York Home needs to be considered as it spans many eras and contains unrelated items to the story. The setting would be best served as the 1940's as this was a very important time period for the individuals in our site's story

D. Any structure onsite that has not been maintained and updated over the years should be addressed. The most pressing facility is the York Bible School. To provide high quality facilities for the visitor experience, this is the most crucial one onsite. Built in the 1940s, it has seen disrepair and neglect since that time, but is a vital part of the story and would be a huge benefit to the visitor experience if renovated.

## THE OPERATIONS: Operational Excellence

**Goal:** Tennessee State Parks will be a national model for operational excellence in a state park system.

**Objective:** *Support and empower our people:* support and empower our workforce by creating a caring environment that encourages professional growth and great customer service.

Action Plan:

A. Create in person training for customer service, going beyond the online training that is offered. In person example at our site has created a very customer service-oriented workforce for full time and seasonal employees.

B. Staff specific field trips to other historic sites, or similar operating sites, would be helpful in creating a strong workforce and a pride in the work that our site focuses on.

C. Recognition of individual staff effort would be crucial in empowering staff members, creating an environment of achievement and self-motivation.

**Objective:** *Efficient and effective operations:* provide efficient, effective, and fiscally responsible service to Tennesseans and our visitors.

Action Plan:

A. Maintain inventory of items, such as cleaning supplies, maintenance tools, and programming supplies to consult before new purchases are made, thus limiting unnecessary purchases.

B. Limit areas to mow and maintain to cut down on equipment costs, while also providing needed habitat and to encourage native plant growth. We have established a mowing plan that highlights areas that do not mow, limit mow, and always mow, therefore keeping continuity for our maintenance regardless of who may be in charge of that here onsite.

C. Utilize materials that are produced onsite to create programs and demonstrations and to be fiscally responsible. E.g.: we have utilized items grown in our garden and fields to demonstrate life in the valley and create memorable experiences for our visitors.

## Park Overview

### Site Fact Sheet

Park Name	Sgt. Alvin C. York State Historic Park
Site Manager	Nathaniel Dodson
Area Manager	Kim Moore
Park acreage	315
Total number of visitors (FY 2022)	371,328
Total expenses before CO (FY 2022)	\$420,628
Total revenues (FY 2022)	\$30,439
Retail cost recovery % <sup>1</sup>	562% for fy 22. We have control (as of 3/23) of our own gift shop and so fy 23 will reflect much different results.
Park cost recovery %	7.2%
Average expense per visitor (FY 2022)	\$1.13
Average revenue per visitor (FY 2022)	8 cents
Gross profit or loss	(390,431)
Total full-time available positions / filled	5/5
Total part-time available positions / filled	1/1
Primary feeder markets	Crossville, Cookeville, Nashville, Knoxville, Pickett State Park Guests, Big South Fork Guests, Cumberland Scenic Byway Guests.
Primary reasons people visit	To Tour the York Home. Many are aware of the site due to the 1941 Warner Bros Film "Sgt. York" Starring Gary Cooper
Opportunities for improvement	Infrastructure onsite including the York Bible School and Honeymoon cottage, as well as furthering the connectivity between the Homesite and the Gristmill site that is divided by a river. Finally, adding/improving Resource based recreation eg: Hiking, canoeing.

<sup>1</sup> Based on T.C.A. 11-3-305, Cost recovery of revenue-generating facilities



## Key Attractions

The amenities or features listed below are those that seem to be most popular for visitors.

- York Home Tour, our primary revenue source as well as the most sought after program offering daily at the park.
- Picnic shelter rentals at the gristmill
- Fishing along the Wolf River
- Driving Tours, offered weekends only
- Visitation of WW1 replica trench

## Site and Operations Assessment

This site and operations assessment is a culmination of analyses and findings from a review of the condition of facilities, infrastructure, and operations at Sgt. Alvin C. York State Historic Park. The findings and observations are not intended to be an exhaustive review of all issues present but provide a basic understanding of the predominant issues that contribute to the site's current operating conditions. The assessment includes the following:

1. Site and Facilities Assessment
2. Operational Assessment
3. Financial Assessment

## Site and Facility Assessment

### Methodology

Facility and asset conditions are rated using a differential scale of excellent, good, fair, or poor. Descriptions of conditions that are attributed to each of these findings are also provided.

Scale of Conditions	
Rating	General Description
Excellent	Facilities/amenities are in 'excellent' condition when they show little or no maintenance or repair problems. Facilities do not feature any major design or operational issues or flaws that contribute to diminished use or increased maintenance or upkeep. Facilities are easy to clean and maintain in order to place them back into public use and the users perceive them to be in excellent shape.
Good	Facilities/amenities are in 'good' condition when they show only minor maintenance or repair problems. Most maintenance issues with these facilities typically appear to be the result of age and/or heavy use. Facilities may only feature minor design or operational issues that contribute to diminished use or increased maintenance or upkeep. Facilities are moderately easy to clean and maintain in order to place them back into service and the users perceive them to be adequate for their use, but probably not in excellent shape.
Fair	Facilities/amenities are in 'fair' condition when they show significant maintenance or repair problems. Facilities generally exhibit ongoing maintenance issues that appear to be the result of age, heavy use, or design or operational flaws. Some maintenance and repair needs may compound their fair condition by being deferred because of budget and/or resource limitations. Facilities require more effort to clean and maintain before placing them back into service and the users may perceive them as being less than adequate for their use and in a state of deterioration. The facility or structure may need of major repair or replacement.

Poor	Facilities/amenities are in 'poor' condition when they show significant, on-going maintenance or repair problems that ultimately may result in suspended use for repair/replacement. Maintenance and repair issues are possibly the result of poor maintenance and clearly the result of age, heavy use, or design or operational flaws. Problems with the facilities are often compounded over time due to consistently-deferred maintenance and repair because of budget and/or resource limitations. Facilities may feature major design or operational issues that contribute to diminished use or increased maintenance or upkeep. Facilities require excessive effort to clean and maintain before placing them back into service and the users often perceive them as being inadequate for their use and in a state of serious deterioration. The facility or structure may need of major repair or replacement.
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### Facility Inventory and Assessment

The table below is an inventory of facilities and amenities at Sgt. Alvin C. York State Historic Park, and provides the assessed condition of each as reviewed in May, 2023.

PARK: Alvin C. York		
PARK ASSET/AMENITY	QUANTITY	CONDITION
Bridge	1	Good
Dam	1	Fair
Equipment Sheds	1	Fair
Grist Mill	1	Fair
Maintenance Building	1	Fair
Museum (House)	1	Good
Picnic Shelters	2	Good
Playgrounds	1	Good
Restaurant & Kitchen (General Store)	1	Good
Restrooms	2	Good
Roads / Paving		Good
Storage Buildings	4	Poor to fair
Trails	1	Good

### Trail Inventory and Assessment

Trail Name	Total	Condition
Sgt. York Burial Site Trail	0.52	Fair
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>0.52</b>	

## New Assets Needed

List new assets and amenities that would fall under capital expenditures that are needed to improve visitor experience and operational efficiency.

New Asset & Amenities	Description
Pedestrian Bridge	Connectivity between the Gristmill area and the York Homesite is needed to provide visitors with a safe crossing over the Wolf River.
Swinging bridge/ pedestrian crossing	Sgt. York burial site trail bridge that needs to be built to replace the former/removed bridge. This would ensure the trail to the burial site was .5 miles in length.
Pogue Creek Connectivity Trail	Efforts had been underway to connect Pogue Creek trail to a trailhead on Delk Creek Rd. Linking the valley to the plateau above at nearby Pickett State Park. This trail would be several miles in length and traverse difficult terrain
Visitor Center Trail Loop	~2.5 - 3 mile loop behind the Visitor Center on unused hillside. This would provide more recreational opportunities as well as connect the visitor to a sense of place as there are overlook opportunities on the hillside.
Yellow Doors Trail	This project was developed but abandoned after issues with local landowners. Connection from Pickett State Forest was discussed as a trail could be developed to the Yellow Doors. This would be a trail several miles in length with difficult terrain to traverse.

## Prioritized Facility Needs

Based on the facility inventory and assessment, these prioritized needs have been identified.

Prioritized Facility Needs	Description
York Bible School	Long neglected structure onsite that should be utilized to further the York story.
Honeymoon Cottage	Abandoned structure onsite that could be utilized for important offices and interpretive uses.

## Operational Assessment

The Operational Assessment includes:

1. An inventory and classification of programs and services being provided at the site,
2. A review of staffing at the site,
3. A review of concessionaires and partners operating at the site,
4. Visitation and customer satisfaction, and
5. Professional development and training.

## Inventory and Classification of Programs and Services

Programs and services are classified into one of three major categories:

- 1) **Core or Essential Services.**
- 2) **Important Services; and**
- 3) **Value added or Visitor Supported Services.**

Functions of the site are classified into these categories based in part on the mission and public mandates for both the site and the agency. For the programs and services in each of these categories, there are financial performance expectations that will define how services are funded and evaluated.

**Category 1 – Core Services** (largely supported by tax funds) Core programs, services and facilities are those the agency must provide and/or essential in order to capably govern and meet statutory requirements. The failure of the agency to provide Category 1 services at adequate levels could result in significant negative consequences for the public and the resources under protection. The services are mandated by the agency's law or charter or are contractually obligated by agreement to provide the services.

- The services are essential to protecting and supporting the public's health and safety.
- The services protect and maintain valuable assets and infrastructure.
- The services would generally and reasonably be expected and supported by residents, businesses, customers, and partners.
- The services are those that cannot or should not be provided by the private sector.
- The services provide a sound investment of public funds.

e levels could result in significant negative consequences for the public and the resources under protection.

The following programs and services at Sergeant Alvin C. York State Historic Park have been identified as **core services**:

- Support the mission of Tennessee State Parks which is "To preserve, protect, and share Tennessee's natural and cultural resources while providing safe, quality outdoor experiences."
- Provide for public access to the park, the facilities and the grounds.
- Provide for public safety for visitors and protection of natural and cultural resources.
- Provide for maintenance of grounds, facilities and infrastructure.
- Maintain facilities developed through the LWCF program to required standards.
- Provide for basic, non-staff supported day-use activities (such as hiking and picnicking) with trails, informational signage, picnic tables, trash cans and restroom facilities.
- Maintain park drinking water and wastewater programs to state standards.
- Campgrounds or non-thematic recreation amenities should not be permitted at this site due to its historical significance.

**Category 2 – Important Services** (supported by a balance of tax funds and earned revenues)

Important programs, services and facilities are those the agency should provide, and are important to governing and effectively serving residents, businesses, customers, and partners.

- The services expand, enhance or support identified core services.
- The services are broadly supported and utilized by the community and are considered an appropriate, important, and valuable public good. Public support may be conditional upon how the services are paid for or funded.
- The services generate income or revenue that offsets some or all the operating costs and/or are deemed to provide economic, social, or environmental outcomes or results.

The following programs and services at Sergeant Alvin C. York State Historic Park have been identified as **important services**:

- Provide a full range of environmental, cultural, and recreational programs.
- Offer park-specific information at the Visitor Center and Nature Center.
- Provide educational programs for schools and organized groups.
  - Preserve and Protect the Homesite of Sgt. York, a National Historic Registry site.
  - Provide Consistent daily interpretive tours of the York Home to visitors
  - Provide recreational opportunities at York Mill, picnicking, fishing, etc.

### **Category 3 – Visitor Supported Services** (almost exclusively supported by earned revenue)

Visitor-supported programs, services, and facilities are those discretionary services that the agency may provide when additional funding or revenue exists to offset the cost of providing those services. Category 3 services provide added value above and beyond what is required or expected. The criteria for programs or services to be classified as visitor supported are:

- The services expand, enhance or support Core Services, Important Services, and the quality of life of the visitors, community, or stakeholders.
- The services are supported, valued, and well utilized and provide an appropriate and valuable public benefit.
- The services generate income or funding from sponsorships, grants, user fees, or other sources that offset some or all of their cost and/or provide a meaningful return on investment.
- The Services can possibly be provided through outsourcing or the use of concessionaires, providing opportunities for community enterprise or services that may not otherwise be provided by the agency.

The following programs and services at Sergeant Alvin C. York State Historic Park have been identified as **visitor supported services**:

- Gift shop
- York home tours
- Two reservable picnic shelters
- Driving tours
- Farm Tours
- Specialty Art tours
- Barn Rental
- Additional Interpretive events/programs with cost, ie: Canoe Float, specialty programs at World War 1 events, specialty programs at York Farm Interpretive Events, etc.

## **Personnel / Staffing Review**

Personnel and staffing at Sgt. Alvin C. York State Historic Park represent the largest area of budgetary expense at an average of 52.7% of the total operating budget each year for the last three complete years, which is less than the target of labor costs not exceeding 65% of total operating expenditures. The tables below and on the following page provide a basic review of the current staffing at the site.

### Full Time Equivalent Employees

Position / Title	Quantity (FTE)	Compensation Total
Park Manager 1	1	*
Park Ranger 2	2	*
Administrative Assistant 1	1	42,504
Museum Curatorial Assistant	1	38,184
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>254,232</b>

*\*Law enforcement compensation confidential by TN law.*

### Part Time Employees

Position / Title	Quantity	Compensation Total
Laborer	1	14.10 per hour - 1950 assigned hours
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>27,495</b>

### Labor Support

Labor Support	Annual Hours
Volunteers	~100 hrs
Community Service Workers	
Engineering and Construction Crews	
Resource Management Crews	
Other: _____	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

### Total Labor Compensation Expense

Labor Type	Labor Expense
Full Time Equivalent Employees	254,232
Part Time Employees	27,495
<b>TOTAL Annual Labor Expense</b>	<b>281,727</b>

### Additional Future Positions Needed

Position / Title	Quantity	FTE or PT	Year Needed	Justification
Conservation worker 1	1	FTE	2024	There are 13 historic structures on site with approximately 25 acres to mow and maintain. This position is critical to maintain and preserve our buildings and grounds to the best of our ability.
Park Interpretive Specialist	1	FTE	2024	Interpretation is year-round for us with Guided house tours offered daily. This position would make it possible for the current staff to focus on their specific job responsibilities by assisting with
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>			

## Financial Performance

Revenue per available unit (**Rev Per Unit**) for the last four years in park facilities is detailed in the table below.

### Current Rev Per Unit

Fiscal Year	Shelters/Barn Rev Per Unit
2019	1.46
2020	1.36
2021	1.64
2022	2.55

**Projected Rev Per Unit** - Based on current Rev Per Unit trends at the park and any known developments over the next four years.

Fiscal Year	Shelters/Barn Rev Per Unit
2023	3.31
2024	4.30
2025	5.59
2026	7.26

## Customer Service

Platform / Site	Year	Customer Satisfaction Level
Yelp	23	5
Trip Advisor	23	5
Google	23	4.8
Facebook	23	5

## Professional Development and Training

The following professional development and training opportunities are being explored and planned for the staff and volunteers at this park:

- AHLFAM conference and site participation. (Living History focus for farm events)
- Basic Canoe course (to ensure safety standards for canoe floats)
- CIG for all staff members
- Routine management training
- Routine law enforcement training

## Summary of Key Recommendations

Please provide short-term, mid-term, and long-term recommendations for addressing operational issues at the park and improving overall park performance.

### Short Term Recommendations (Less than 1 year)

#### 1. Site and Facilities

- a. Identify any pressing maintenance needs (roof leaks, painting needs, roofing, siding)
- b. Consistent signage, updated informational panels for important sites (forks of the wolf, Camp McGinnis, bible school)

#### 2. Operations and Staffing

- a. Increase staffing by adding conservation worker and Parks Interpretive Specialist creating a fully operational staff that can focus on individual job responsibilities.
- b. Develop tours at other facilities to add to existing tour offerings, giving visitors more options when onsite.

#### 3. Customer Service / Visitor Experience

- a. Update Museum displays and information panels
- b. Update York Home display items to reflect 1940s era

### Mid Term Recommendations (2–5 years)

#### 1. Site and Facilities

- a. Preservation work begun on York bible School and Honeymoon cottage
- b. Acquire important properties in the area that relate to York's story
- c. Secure easements that may needed to reach important cultural sites in the valley.

#### 2. Operations and Staffing

- a. Add conservation worker and Parks interpretive specialist to current staffing if not previously hired.
- b. Develop yearly rotating event schedule to include WW1 events, cultural events eg: square dances and sorghum making, Concerts, and Speaker Series.

#### 3. Customer Service / Visitor Experience

- a. Offer daily schedule to visitors detailing the tours and programs occurring across the entire site. (During busy season May-August)

### Long Term Recommendations (5+ years)

#### 1. Site and Facilities

- a. Complete restoration York Bible School
- b. Move Park offices and Archive to Bible School
- c. Acquire important properties in the area that relate to York's story

#### 2. Operations and Staffing

- a. Staff with conservation worker and parks interpretive specialist if not previously hired.
- b. Utilize seasonal employees during the busy season to operate tour schedules.

#### 3. Customer Service / Visitor Experience

- a. Offer parkwide "entry" ticket that allows visitor to experience different tour offerings.
- b. VR experience for WW1 trench and upstairs of York Home



## Resource Management Plan

A resource management plan is a specific statement of the objectives you have for your land and natural resources, as well as any significant cultural and historic resources stewarded by the state park. This includes a defined series of priorities and activities that will take place in order to meet those objectives. This can include future potential land acquisitions or divestitures that are necessary to meet the park's resource management goals and objectives.

Vision Statement of Sgt. Alvin C. York State Historic Park: to educate, protect, and carry forward the legacy of Sgt. York by professionally managing not only his narrative, and the secondary narratives that accompany his story, but the historic structures and material culture found on site that are critical public use and educational features. In addition to this, it is also critical in our sites vision to ensure all staff are professionally trained, passionate, and dedicated to seeing this vision through in perpetuity.

The contents of this resource management plan are as follows:

1. Resource Management Objectives
2. Resource Inventory and Assessment
3. Management Strategies
4. Priority Actions
5. Supplemental Information

## Resource Management Objectives

**Goal:** Tennessee State Parks will be nationally recognized for exemplary stewardship of natural and cultural resources.

**Objective - *More and better stewards:*** Increase internal and external stewards who share Tennessee State Parks core values and can contribute to the State Parks mission to steward Tennessee's natural and cultural resources.

**Objective - *Better resource management practices:*** Identify, manage, and restore unique natural and cultural resources for generations to come.

**Objective: *Better data and technology:*** Leverage data and technology to help inform and guide decisions on natural and cultural resources stewardship.

Aligned with these objectives are specific strategies to achieve the desired outcomes for the natural, cultural, and historic resources of this park.

### Strategies

- I. **Exotic/Invasive Plant Removal**
  - a. Removal of Chinese Privet with park staff and or contractors.
  - b. Removal of Tree of Heaven with park staff and or contractors.
  - c. Removal of Japanese Honeysuckle with park staff and or contractors.
- II. **Native Species Inventory and Management**
  - a. Work with Director Roger McCoy and the Division of Natural Areas to determine native species and any sensitive species existing on park property.
  - b. Manage habitat for native species in areas where appropriate.
  - c. Determine areas where native grasses could be planted.

**III. Boundary Identification/Marking**

- a. Work to identify park boundaries and begin work to mark park boundaries with signage/blazing. To date, the park boundary has only been marked on the hillside behind the visitor center.
- b. Periodically inspect boundary lines to ensure that the boundary is clearly marked and that there have been no illegal encroachments on the property.
- c. Re-sign and/or re-paint the boundary when necessary.

**IV. Provide oversight responsibilities.**

- a. Develop reports to track accomplishments and completed projects and monitor the future needs of the park. A completed annual report should be filed by the end of January of the following year.
- b. Report activities in the Resource Management and Interpretive Reports website upon completing any cultural resource management project.
- c. Update the management plan as needed.

**V. Address Maintenance Needs**

- a. Stabilize and restore farm outbuildings.
- b. Restore York Gristmill to working order.
- c. Address leaking dam and potential erosion issues at the York Gristmill

**VI. Trail system installation**

- a) Installation of trail system from Gristmill to York Bible School
- b) Installation of loop trail in Shooting Match field to encompass Forks of the Wolf.
- c) Installation of loop trail on hillside behind Visitor Center.

**VII. Historic Restoration**

- a. Work towards restoring the historic footprint of Alvin York Farm to include removal of unnecessary non historic structures, install appropriate fencing, etc.
- b. Restore York Bible School for park uses and interpretive space.

## Resource Inventory and Assessment

The significant natural, cultural and historic resources of the park requiring management are detailed below including a condition assessment rating for each. Condition assessments are selected from the following options based on what most describes the current condition of the resource:

1. **Excellent** – resource is in excellent condition; all potential threats to the integrity of the resource are currently managed and effectively mitigated.
2. **Good** – resource is generally in good condition and stable; threats to the integrity of the resource require regular management in order to mitigate.
3. **Fair** – resource is in stable condition but difficult to mitigate ongoing threats; additional management support is required.
4. **Poor** – resource is generally in poor condition with management support required to both improve existing conditions and address threats.
5. **Critical** – resource is highly threatened or deteriorated and requires immediate management prioritization.

Significant Park Resources	Quantity	Current Conditions	Notes
York Home		Good	The main reason for park visitation is to tour this home. This tour has a ticket price and thus is our highest revenue generator on the park. It is now 101 years old and constantly in need of evaluation and repair to preserve it into the future.
Visitor Center		Good	This building was rebuilt in the early 2000's to recreate the original store that sat onsite.
York Barn		Fair	Built in 1962, this building hosts many of our park events, and is reservable for weddings and events. It is scheduled to receive a new roof. There are boards along the sides that will need replaced within the next few years.
Corn Crib		Fair	One of the earliest buildings onsite, this structure has been made into a WW1 era bunkhouse for our living history events. It acts as storage during the off season and may be in need of structural supports soon.
Blacksmith Shop		Good	This is a rebuilt structure made to replicate the original building that sat onsite.
Gristmill		Fair	This structure dates to around 1880 with some of the structural beams dated earlier than that. Siding was just replaced on it in 2022.
York Bible School		Poor	Long neglected structure onsite that should be utilized to further the York story. Some minor restoration work has been accomplished including gutters, repaint of the porch, and new ridge cap on the roof.
Honeymoon cottage		Poor	This building dates to the 1930's. If restoration work could be accomplished, the park would like to do that to ensure this building could be utilized in the future.
Canning House		Good	A stone outbuilding that serves as a Living History interpretive station.
Chicken coop		Good	A shed being utilized again as a chicken coop in 2022 and '23

Play house		Good	An outbuilding that is utilized for living history interpretation
Generator shed		Good	An outbuilding currently utilized for storage
Stone storage shed/restroom facility		Good	Previously a maintenance shed, this structure was renovated into restrooms in 2016 and also serves as an interpretive space with interpretive panels and information available.
Hardwood forest	250-275 acres	Fair	We have evidence of some invasives, but the 2 <sup>nd</sup> generation forests around the park are in fair condition.
Wolf River	Approx. ¾ mile	Good	Wolf River has bordering farmlands that utilize spraying, which can run into the waterway, as well as cattle bordering the river in several locations near the park.

## Management Strategies

The management strategies outlined below are directly correlated to the resources identified previously in the *Resource Inventory and Assessment* section immediately above. These are general and overall management recommendations for each resource from which priority actions will be determined. Each resource has both a “Public Use” management strategy (which could include limited or no public access, or managed access with infrastructure and regulation) and a “General Management” strategy.

The priority assignments reflect the highest resource management priorities of the park over the next 1-5 years (High Priority) and 6-10 years (Moderate Priority)

Resource	Management Recommendations	Priority
National Registered Historic Structures	<p><b>Public Use:</b> York Home managed with tour tickets and limited visitation numbers. Other facilities such as the Gristmill, General Store, and York Bible school maintain limited open hours from 8-4:30.</p> <p><b>General Management:</b> Facility management, collaborate with TN Historic Commission and National Historic Registry to maintain compliance with management of historic structures.</p>	High

Hardwood forest	<p><b>Public Use:</b> Access along wolf river, and otherwise, not accessible by general public.</p> <p><b>General Management:</b> Felling occurs along the exterior edges of the managed forests around the site. Most of the forests are in underutilized zones of the park, and often on steep topography.</p>	Moderate
Wolf River	<p><b>Public Use:</b> Open access for fishing and boating and swimming.</p> <p><b>General Management:</b> River cleanup and bank erosion maintenance occurs. The river floods several times a year and generally maintains any strainers or backup on its own.</p>	Moderate

## Land Management Strategies

In some cases, strategic land acquisitions or divestitures are necessary to meet the overall resource management goals and objectives of the park. This can include opportunities to address buffers, watersheds, viewsheds, inholdings, and adjacent properties. The table below details **general strategies** for land management. Timelines refer to Short Term (1-3 years), Mid Term (4-6 years), and Long Term (7-10 years).

Land Management Strategy	Timeline
Acquire relevant adjacent properties to protect historical resource and connect visitors with the landscape	Mid-Long Term
Secure any easements necessary to access historic or important locations	Mid-Long Term

## Interpretive Programming and Education Plan

The Interpretation, Programming, and Education planning is currently going through a planning process to further build out the process. This section only represents the very basic framework. As TSP moves forward with the future of Interpretive programming and education this section will likely be changed to accommodate those modifications.

Attached to this plan are the Interpretive Program Templates in fillable PDF forms.

The overarching interpretive mission of Sgt. Alvin C. York State Historic Park is to interpret, operate, protect, and preserve the narrative, material culture, and home site of one of the most influential American to emerge from the First World War. Sgt. Alvin C. York State Historic Park's interpretive reach goes beyond the Tennessee State Park system and impacts our collective history on a national stage, signified by its National Register of Historic Places designation in 1977. By effectively presenting the site and Sgt. York's narrative in a broader significance that also incorporates an array of secondary interpretive themes, the caretakers of this site will enable its perpetual position of importance culturally and historically.

The mission of Sgt. Alvin C. York State Historical Park is to perpetually preserve, protect, and share the narrative of one of Tennessee's most beloved sons whose impact reaches well beyond the Valley of the Three Forks of the Wolf onto a national stage which generated great social and educational change during the first half of the twentieth century.

## Interpretation, Programming and Education Goals

**Goal:** Tennessee State Parks will be the most accessible, welcoming, and inviting system of parks that enriches Tennesseans and visitors through excellent interpretation, education, and resource-based recreation.

**Objective:** *accessible, welcoming, and inviting to all:* create quality and varied programs of interpretation, recreation, and outreach so that all audiences feel welcome and invited.

**Objective:** *high quality programming:* develop and support mission-based and resource-relevant programs to engage visitors, empower staff, and develop community wellbeing.

**Objective:** *resource-based outdoor recreation:* provide resource-based outdoor recreation opportunities that ensure representation of Tennessee's natural, scenic, and cultural resources.

Within these objectives are the following desired outcomes:

- Building stewards
- Ensuring Equity
- Provide the Highest Value
- Develop Resource Based Programming
- Support Staff

## Strategic Programs and Services

The strategies detailed below with corresponding action plans are aligned with the Comprehensive Strategic Plan of Tennessee State Parks.

**Strategy –Telling Full Stories:** to identify and replicate best practices while establishing new methods for representing diverse, equitable, inclusive, and just dialogues.

**Action Plan:** While there is already some of this discussion going on in our current home tours and various programs throughout the year, specific research and programs, and informational panels/displays need to be developed concerning these three topics:

- D. Womens History – discussion and research of women’s roles in the Valley during the time period of York’s life would be crucial. Demonstrations and programs highlighting contributions from not only members of Sgt. York’s family, but other local families throughout the area.
- E. Minority History – There is evidence of minorities in the valley, but very little research is conducted. Several names have been discovered by park staff and research is ongoing to tell those individuals stories. Contributions from minorities towards life in the valley is significant and needs more attention. Some examples would be workers on the Wolf River Incline which included African American railroad workers as well as Chinese families who worked with the railroad. In addition, a slave cemetery was located on Delk Creek Rd. near the park.
- F. Labor History – This topic would be very easy to develop concerning our site. The Labor history in the area is well documented and very prevalent, developing the background story to a lot of the individuals that we highlight daily. The work that was accomplished shaped these people’s lives and made them who they are.

**Strategy – Interpretative Media:** Connecting people to the resources of Tennessee State Parks with technology in ways that complement and expand interpretation within and beyond the park, giving everyone access to becoming a park steward.

**Action Plan:**

- A. Utilize Park formstacks to determine visitor reaction to the programs presented at the park. Use that data to improve or modify the program.
- B. Track overall visitor usage of target areas to determine the best use for that area. Does it need to be maintained, or can a resource management plan be established for that area to increase native species, or encourage habitat for wildlife, etc?
- C. Updated Museum displays utilizing new equipment like touch screens, sound bites, imagery, and interactive programs would be crucial in providing a new source of connection to the park, and thus, more stewardship of the site.
- D. VR experience of the WW1 trench
- E. VR experience of upstairs of York Home which is inaccessible to mobility issues.

**Strategy – Develop and maintain a portfolio of programs across multiple types of experiences:**

**Action Plan:**

- A. Interpretation of natural, historic, and cultural resources
- B. 3-5 unique experiences for all audiences
- C. Varying intensity from self-guided to immersive experiences
- D. Partnership opportunities for program delivery
- E. Varying costs to the user from “free to fee” based on value of the benefit to the participant.



## Interpretive Goals

1. For Sgt. Alvin C. York State Historic Park to continue a high standard in historic preservation and interpretation, ensuring the park's directive for preserving in perpetuity the narrative of Sgt. York is fulfilled.
2. To continue to update, develop and constantly reevaluate interpretive programs and interpretive infrastructure of Sgt. Alvin C. York State Historic Park
3. Continue to foster a growing relationship with local, state, and national community organizations and professional organizations.
4. Increase overall programming and in particular secondary theme programs as the site evolves beyond just the theme of Sgt. York and WWI.

## Interpretive Plan Actions

Interpretive Plan Actions (requires outside funding)
1. A renovation and restoration of the York Home, completed to professional standards to ensure its sustainability for the next century.
2. A renovation, restoration, and final adaptive reuse utilization of the York Bible School, seeing through a project which has been neglected for decades and is a critical historical feature on-site
3. A more cohesive theme developed with the historical objects displayed inside the York Home to better reflect the 1930's/ 1940's.
4. Complete the implementation of the Alvin C. York Archive and open to general public use.
5. Enhance and expand Living History farming projects and events

Interpretive Plan Actions (accomplished with existing resources)
1. Complete full wayside replacement and redesign on site.
2. Install additional interpretive features focused on secondary interpretive themes.
3. Develop living history programming focused on life in the Wolf River Valley beyond the Civil War and WWI, ranging from late 18 <sup>th</sup> Century through the mid-20 <sup>th</sup> Century.



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| 4. Complete a trail-way onsite, to include the installation of interpretive waysides and kiosks. These trails should include: Bible School access trail from Gristmill, Shooting Match Field loop trail, loop trail on hillside behind Visitor Center. Long term planning would connect 2 or more of these trails together to form a more cohesive trail system. |
| 5. Acquire an updated orientation film to be featured in the park visitor center, produced by in-house resources.  |

**Strategy** – Develop and maintain diverse and varied resourced-based outdoor recreation opportunities across multiple types of experiences:

- A. Managing recreational use with the stewardship needs of the resource
- B. Varying intensity from self-guided to guided experiences
- C. Partnership opportunities for program delivery
- D. Varying costs to the user from “free to fee” based on value of the benefit to the participant and impact to the resource.

Action Plan: See above Interpretive plan actions

#### HELPFUL DEFINITIONS:

- Nonpersonal Interpretation: Interpretive media that do not require a person to deliver a message (i.e. exhibits, waysides, brochures, signs, magazines, books, etc.).
- Personal Interpretation: One person or persons providing interpretation to another person or persons.
- Interpretive Program: Activities, presentations, publications, audio-visual media, signs, and exhibits that convey key heritage resource messages to audiences. (Adapted from US Fish & Wildlife Service)
- Interpretation: a purposeful approach to communication that facilitates meaningful, relevant, and inclusive experiences that deepen understanding, broaden perspectives, and inspire engagement with the world around us.

## Financial Performance Goals

Financial performance goals are a critical performance management tool of the Tennessee State Park System. While the financial performance of parks are managed more intently at the system level, individual parks are expected to recover a portion of their operating costs through the generation of earned revenues where appropriate and to contribute to the system goals. The majority of earned revenues at state parks are generated through facility usage (campsites, cabins, lodge rooms, rentable pavilions, etc.), the delivery of fee-based programs and services, equipment rental and usage, and retail sales. Other forms of revenue generation come from golf courses and restaurants where those amenities are present. That said, not all parks have the same ability to generate earned revenues because the availability of facilities or programs vary widely from one park to the next. The “recovery” of operational costs by earned revenues is referred to as “cost recovery”. Operating costs beyond those supported by earned revenues represents the extent to which state funding support operations at each park.

The table below represents the overall park cost recovery for this specific park for the most recent fiscal year and forecast estimates for the upcoming five years. These estimates are based on projection estimates for known and foreseeable costs and recovery figures.

FINANICAL PERFORMANCE GOALS						
	Current Cost Recovery (2022)	Target Cost Recovery: FY 2023	Target Cost Recovery: FY 2024	Target Cost Recovery: FY: 2025	Target Cost Recovery: FY 2026	Target Cost Recovery: FY 2027
Park Overall	7.2%	7.12%	9.79%	9.99%	10.12%	10.23%

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